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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine what courses of study related to multicultural education were being offered by Canadian universities and what teacher competencies related to multicultural skills were considered important by professionals in Canada. Two questionnaires were responded to by 25 persons involved or interested in multicultural education. The first questionnaire resulted in a list of courses available at 14 universities: the five major topics discussed in these courses were: (1) minority groups, racism, prejudice, and discrimination; (2) study of cultures; (3) language and culture; (4) cross-cultural communication; and (5) curriculum development. In the second questionnaire, respondents ranked the importance of 18 multiculturally related areas of teacher competence. The five areas perceived as most important were: (1) developing cultural sensitivity; (2) integrating multiculturalism in various subject areas; (3) knowledge of the Canadian multicultural society; (4) dealing with racial differences in the classroom; and (5) recognizing bias in assessment instruments. (CB)

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A SURVEY OF TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES AND COMPETENCIES FOR MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

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A SURVEY OF TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES AND COMPETENCIES FOR MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

Cultural pluralism has been a prime characteristic of Canada's population. However, in recent history factors such as the heavy immigration, focus on human rights, the rise of Native concerns, and the increased French Canadian nationalism have led to the development of a policy of multiculturalism. In announcing the federal policy on October 8, 1971, the Prime Minister said, "Although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other." He added, "A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own culture and values within the Canadian context."

This policy implies that schools should assume a special responsibiltiy in preparing students for effective participation in the multicultural society. Discussing the implications of multiculturalism for education, Hogg and McComb (1969) stress the role of the school in these words:

> The school must go beyond just becoming a reflection of cultural diversity. It must participate in, and prepare youth for, a culturally pluralistic life and society; and as such an educational strategy must become a major and clearly articulated set of goals in the educational process (p. 238).

Unfortunately, schools seem to use the term "multicultural education" in a narrow sense. Many schools which provide instruction

in English as a second language consider such a course as their multicultural education program. A few schools which use a non-official language such as German or Ukranian as a medium of instruction also claim that they are providing a multicultural education program. Schools in which the social studies curriculum contains some discussion of immigrants and/or Native people take pride in saying that they, too, offer a multicultural education program.

Colleges and universities which offer courses for teacher training use terms such as "multicultural education," "intercultural education," and "cross-cultural education" almost synonymously. However, in the literature the term "multicultural education" appears more frequently than other terms not only in Canada, but also in the United States, Britain, and Australia. In the United States, this term has been promoted by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) through their publications. In the Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education, NCATE defines multicultural education in this way:

> Multicultrual education is preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters. ...This preparation provides a process by which an individual develops competencies in perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving in different cultural settings (p.4).

According to Baker (1983) multicultural education has three major goals. The first goal relates to making one aware of one's cultural heritage. The second goal leads from self cultural identity

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to understanding and appreciating other cultures. The third goal expects an individual to function comfortably in more than one culture.

In order to achieve these goals, combined efforts of the community, teachers, administrators, and teacher educators are needed to develop a comprehensive plan consisting of a statement of philosophy, objectives, implementation strategy and evaluation design. Multicultural education is not a separate subject but is a process which permeates the entire school curriculum. Instructional activities in art, music, physical education, language and literature, science, and social studies should reflect the goals of multicultural education.

The key person in a school who has the greatest influence on the lives of children is the teacher. Because of his/her contact with children on a regular basis, a teacher can have a profound impact on students' perceptions, self-concepts, beliefs and attitudes. Although most classrooms are multicultural, most teachers who teach in them are monocultural (Mahan, 1979). These teachers must develop professional skills in order to be effective with culturally diverse children.

Several writers have discussed specific competencies that teachers must have for multicultural classrooms. Pusch and her associates (1979) suggest that teachers should be "able to suspend judgement, observe and interpret culturally determined behaviors, tolerate ambiguity, and percieve the differences and similarities that exist between cultures". Gay (1977) recommends knowledge, attitudes and skills that are important for teachers. Under knowledge Gay includes content of cultural pluralism, philosophy of multicultural education, classroom dynamics, and ethinic resource materials. The

attitude component refers to realistic attitudes toward cultural differences, self-awareness, and a sense of security about ethnic diversity. The skill component consists of cross-cultural interactional skills, multicultural curriculum development skills, and multicultural instructional skills. Some authors have presented lists of specific teacher competencies. Some of these lists are categorized, others are not. Wynn (1974) lists 31 teacher competencies needed for effective teaching of culturally different youth. A list by Kalectca (1974) includes 13 statements of teacher competencies. Narang (1983) describes twelve areas of teacher preparation for multicultural classrooms. Baptiste (1979) specifies eleven cognitive and eight affective competencies for teachers. The Center for Applied Linguistics has published Guidelines for the Preparation and Certification of Teachers of Bilingual/Bicultural Education which consists of 59 competencies organized under these headings: Personal Qualities; Language Proficiency; Linguistic; Culture; Instructional Methods; Curriculum Utilization and Adaptation; Assessment; and School-Community Relations. These Guidelines have implications for teacher preparation for multicultural education.

Some writers consider inter-cultural/cross-cultural communication as a significant factor in multicultural teacher education. Kimball (1974) suggest that it is important that the teacher be aware of intercultural communication, be able to resolve both inter- and intracultural clashes and maintain flexible yet consistent teaching standards which supplement different socialization patterns. Kehoe (1982) presents the following dimensions of cross-cultural communication: respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, interaction management and ambiguity tolerance. He also

proposes an observation schedule of classroom interaction. This schedule can be used to assess the degree to which teachers are effective in cross-cultural communication.

With a view to preparing a compact list of teacher competencies for multicultural classrooms, this writer reviewed the relevant literature and also interviewed a small sample of teacher educators. This resulted in the following list of 18 broad competencies:

1. Knowledge of the Canadian Mosaic

   Teachers need to understand the nature of the society and how it has emerged over th years. An understanding of the socio-economic and political factors in immigration patterns and a knowledge of the ethno-cultural backgrounds of the people would provide teachers with a meaningful picture of the Canadian mosaic.

2. Understanding of the Similarities and Differences Among Ethno-cultural Groups

   In order to work effectively with students of diverse cultural background, teachers should develop an understanding of the similarities and differences among ethno-cultural groups in the community. Cultural background has a bearing on the behaviors, values, and life styles of people. Understanding the similarities between and among groups can lead to recognition of universal human values and can thereby contribute to appreciation of the similarities. And it can at the same time produce tolerance of, or possibly valuing of the differences.

3. Knowledge of the Contributions of Minority Groups

   If minority groups are examined closely, the ways that each of them has contributed to the society at large will be found. Such knowledge will help students feel proud of their ethnic origins and will encourage them to assume active roles as equal partners in the society.

4. Knowledge of Curriculum Evaluation

Several studies have pointed out examples of racism, sexism, distrotions and omissions in school textbooks. Researchers have developed instruments for evaluating the treatment of minority groups in the instructional materials. Teachers need to be familiar with these tools so that they are able to identify biases and deficiencies in published materials.

5. Skills in Curriculum Development

When commercial curriculum materials are found to be unacceptable, teachers have to develop their own materials. In constructing new materials teachers need to develop such skills as identifying students' socio-emotional needs, expressing ideas in a readable style, using appropriate typographical aids for effective communication, applying the principles of learning, and promoting the philosophy of multicultural education.

6. Recognizing Bias in Assessment Instruments

Teaching and evaluation go hand in hand. Teachers often use commercially available tests to determine student achievement. Some of these tests, however, contain items that favour children from a certain culture. Consequently, children from other cultures are at a disadvantage in such situations. Teachers need to be able to recognize potential linguistic and cultural biases in published instruments.

7. Developing Cultural Sensitivity

Good teaching requires interpersonal skills. For effective interpersonal communication, teachers eed to be aware of the kinship patterns, religious affiliations, values, and attitudes of students who belong to a culture different from their own.

8. Skills in Dealing with Racial Conflict

Students coming from different backgrounds are likely to experience cultural or racial conflict in the classroom. A teacher should be aware of methods for dealing with such conflicts. A knowledge of the causes of racial prejudice and discrimination is important for the teacher.

9. Skills in Inter-cultural Communication

In order to promote harmony and positive interaction in the classroom, teachers need to learn inter-clutural and cross-cultural communication techniques using verbal and non-verbal media.

10. Facilitating Identification With and Pride in One's Mother Tongue

Many minority students find themselves torn between the mother culture they experience at home and the dominant culture of the school. Teachers, therefore, need to learn and practice skills that would enhance the identity of individuals with their mother culture and promote pride in their roots.

11. Ability to Use Teaching Strategies Suitable for a Pluralistic Environment

Culturally different children differ in the ways in which they learn. Their classroom behaviours often reflect their cultural backgrounds. Teachers should be able to use strategies that suit the characteristics and learning styles of the students.

12. Ability to Integrate Multiculturalism in Various Subject Areas

Multiculturalism is a process. A teacher should be able to promote multiculturalism through various subject areas. She/he should use multicultural activities in all subject areas to motivate student learning.

13. Understanding the Basic Principles of Teaching English as a Second Language

Since a majority of immigrants use English as the means of communication for day-to-day activities and because English is the medium of instruction in a large number of schools across Canada, it is suggested that teachers of multicultural classrooms should acquire an understanding of the basic principles of TESL.

14. Knowledge of the Child-rearing Practices in Various Cultures

The first three years are considered to be the most important in the life of a child. It is during these years that a foundation for behaviours and attitudes is laid which becomes difficulty to modify in later

years. A knowledge of child-rearing practices in various cultures would help the teacher gain an insight into the child's perceptions and beliefs.

15. Literacy in the Minority Language and Dialect of the Target Population

This is an ideal expectation. Certainly, if the teacher has a knowledge of the oral and written language that is used in the home, it would help the teacher in relating with and thereby facilitating interaction with the child.

16. Knowledge of the Learning Styles and Ethnic Differences

Since ethnic background appears to have a bearing on learning styles, it is desirable that a teacher should acquire an understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and learning styles.

17. Understanding the Principles and Practices of Bilingualism

Since a bilingual person is able to function in two languages, bilingualism is considered an aspect of multiculturalism. Bilingualism also promotes an understanding and an appreciation of two cultures. Some understanding of bilingual practices would be useful to teachers working with multilingual and multi-racial children.

18. Skills in Values Clarification

Values clarification is an important process in multi-cultural classrooms. A teacher who is skilled in analyzing the basis of values without showing his or her bias is more able to assist students in developing a clear understanding of different value systems.

A SURVEY OF TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES AND COMPETENCIES

In order to find out what courses of study related to multi-cultural education were being offered by Canadian universities and what teacher competencies were considered important by professionals, two questionnaires were mailed in October 1983 to 34 persons involved or interested in multicultural education at 22 Canadian universities including

the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education, commonly known as OISE. These persons were identified with the help of the Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education.

The first questionnaire resulted in a list of courses available at 14 universities in seven provinces (See Appendix A). These courses are generally available to both the elementary and secondary teachers. The five major topics discussed in these courses were: (i) minority groups, racism, prejudice and discrimination, (ii) study of cultures, (iii) language and culture, (iv) cross-cultural communication, and (v) curriculum development.

The second questionnaire asked the same respondents to rate on a four point scale (1, Not Important; 4, Very Important) the importance of each of the 18 areas of teacher preparation discussed above. A total of 26 usable responses were received.

The mean ratings for the 18 identified areas are shown in Table 1. The five most important areas as noted in Table 1 are: developing cultural sensitivity, ability to integrate multiculturalism in various subject areas, knowledge of the Canadian multicultural society, skills in dealing with racial differences in the classroom, and recognizing bias in assessment instruments. The five areas rated as least important were: literacy in minority language or dialect of the target population, understanding basic principles of teaching English as a second language, knowledge of child rearing practices in various cultures, skills in values clarification, and knowledge of curriculum development.

A comparison of the major topics covered in the courses of study and the five areas of teacher preparation rated as most important indicates that there is a reasonable degree of congruence between the two. However, further investigation is necessary to determine the amount of actual emphasis placed on the areas of teacher

preparation in the courses offered at various universities. The ratings of the areas of teacher preparation reported in Table 1 can be used in revising existing multicultural education courses and in designing new ones.

TABLE I

MEAN RATINGS OF AREAS OR TEACHER PREPARATION

Developing Cultural Sensitivity	3.9
Ability to Integrate Multiculturalism in Various Subject Areas	3.7
Knowledge of the Canadian Multicultural Society	3.6
Skills in Dealing with Racial Differences in the Classroom	3.6
Recognizing Bias in Assessment Instruments	3.5
Ability to Use Teaching Strategies Suitable for Pluralistic Environment	3.5
Skills in Inter-cultural Communication	3.4
Understanding of the Similarities and Differences Between and Among Ethno-cultural Groups	3.3
Knowledge of Learning Styles & Ethnic Differences	3.3
Knowledge of the Contributions of Minority Groups	3.2
Facilitating Identification with and Pride in Mother Culture	3.2
Knowledge of Curriculum Evaluation	2.8
Understanding the Principles and Practices of Bilingualism	2.8
Knowledge of Curriculum Development	2.7
Skills in Value Clarification	2.7
Knowledge of Child-rearing Practices in Various Cultures	2.7
Understanding Basic Principles of Teaching English as a Second Language	2.5
Literacy in Minority Language or Dialect of the Target Population	2.2

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APPENDIX A

COURSES RELATED TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION OFFERED AT CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES*

ALBERTA

University of Alberta

History of Education of Selected Minority Groups in Western Canada

University of Calgary

Multicultural Bases of Education
Field Studies of Multicultural Education

University of Lethbridge

Teaching Culturally-Different Students

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Simon Fraser University

Cultural Differences in Education

University of British Columbia

Education of Immigrant Children
Visible Minority Perspectives of Canadian Curriculum and Education (G)

MANITOBA

University of Manitoba

Cross-cultural Education
Problems in Cross-cultural Education (G)
Perspectives on the Education of Minorities (G)
Seminar in Cross-cultural Education (G)

NEWFOUNDLAND

Memorial University

Interaction of Culture and Learning

NOVA SCOTIA

Dalhousie University

Multiculturalism and Education (G)

ONTARIO

Ontario Institute for the Study of Education

The Psychological Aspects of Teaching and Counselling New Canadians (G)
Research Seminar in Multicultural Studies (G)
Minority Groups & Cultural Determinants of the Curriculum (G)
Minority Groups, Multiculturalism, and Policy Making in Education (G)
Research Seminar in the Education of Minority Group Children (G)
Multiracial, Multicultural Education in Comparative Perspective (G)

University of Ottawa

Political & Professional Organization in Education

Queen's University

Educational Implications of Cultural Diversity

University of Toronto

Cross-cultural Education
Multiculturalism; The School, & Curriculum

QUEBEC

Concordia University

Selected Topics in Comparative Education: Education & Multiculturalism
Education of Immigrants & Minorities (G)
Minority Status & Learning (G)

McGill University

The Education of Minorities
Minority Education in Comparative Perspective (G)

*OISE is included among universities

(G) indicates a graduate course